

Chapter VII. Education and Training Statistics: Completions, by field of study

Data on the number of awards, degrees, and certificates completed during 2003–04, by type of educational program and detailed field of study, were collected in fall 2004 through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Web-based data collection system of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education. These data, covering the period from July 1, 2003, to June 30, 2004, are presented in table VII–1. NCES surveyed institutions of higher education that offered awards at the bachelor's degree level and higher, institutions with 2-year programs, and public and private institutions with programs of less than 2 years. The 2000 version of the Classification of Instructional Programs was used to categorize the data.

About 3.6 million postsecondary awards and degrees were earned during the 2003–04 academic year, an increase of about 1 million, or 36 percent, from 10 years earlier. Formal degrees earned included 675,000 associate degrees, 1.5 million bachelor's degrees, 589,000 master's degrees (including 20,000 postbaccalaureate certificates), 62,000 doctoral degrees (including 13,000 postmaster's certificates), and 86,000 first professional degrees (including 1,000 first professional certificates). In addition, there were 357,000 nondegree formal awards for the completion of 1- to 4-year curricula during 2003–04, along with 364,000 awards for the completion of programs of less than 1 year. Both levels of awards saw considerable growth from 10 years earlier, with 1- to 4- year awards increasing by 49 percent and awards of less than 1 year by 158 percent. More than a third of both types of awards were earned in the field of health professions and related clinical sciences, with significant numbers also earned in personal and culinary services; mechanic and repair technologies/technicians; and business, management, marketing, and related support services.

About 675,000 associate degrees were earned, an increase of 27 percent from 10 years earlier. Almost two-thirds were earned in three disciplines: liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities; health professions and related clinical sciences; and business, management, marketing, and related support services. According to the middle alternative set of the most recent NCES projections, which uses a base year of 2002–03, the number of associate degrees earned is expected to grow to 735,000 by 2013–14, an increase of 16 percent over the 2002–03 figure.

The number of earned bachelor's degrees earned was 1,492,000 during 2003–04, up about 28 percent from 1993–94. Business, management, marketing, and related support services accounted for about 22 percent of these degrees, while social sciences contributed 9 percent and education an-

other 8 percent. Disciplines that saw rapid growth over the past 10 years include computer and information sciences and support services (up about 153 percent); parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies (up about 97 percent); and visual and performing arts (up about 64 percent). NCES projects that the number of bachelor's degrees earned will grow to 1,582,000 by 2013–14, an increase of 17 percent from 2002–03.

Master's degrees earned totaled 569,000 in 2003–04, about 47 percent more than in 1993–94. More than half were earned in the fields of education and business, management, marketing, and related support services. These fields also accounted for the majority of gains in master's degrees earned over the last 10 years, with education degrees increasing by 65,000 (65 percent growth) and business, management, marketing, and related support services degrees increasing by 51,000 (55 percent growth). NCES projects the number of master's degrees earned to grow to 693,000 by 2013–14, an increase of 35 percent from 2002–03. Data presented in Table VII-1 include about 20,000 postbaccalaureate certificates earned in 2003–04, primarily from education programs.

About 49,000 doctoral degrees were earned during 2003–04, an increase of 14 percent from 10 years earlier. The disciplines in which most of the degrees were earned were education, engineering, biological and biomedical sciences, and psychology, together totaling almost half of all doctoral degrees earned. NCES projects the number of doctoral degrees earned to grow to 55,000, an increase of 19 percent from 2002–03. Data presented in Table VII-1 include about 13,000 postmaster's certificates earned in 2003–04, primarily from education programs.

The number of first professional degrees earned totaled approximately 85,000 during 2003–04, about 13 percent more than in 1993–94. Forty-eight percent were earned in law and legal studies, 45 percent in health professions and related clinical sciences, and the remainder in theology and religious vocations. NCES projects the number of first professional degrees earned to grow to 101,000 by 2013–14, an increase of 25 percent over the 2002–03 figure. Data presented in Table VII-1 include about 1,000 first professional certificates earned in 2003–04, primarily from health professions and related clinical sciences programs.

Information on obtaining data on postsecondary education from NCES is available on the Internet. Visit the NCES site (<http://www.nces.ed.gov>) for the *Digest of Education Statistics*, IPEDS data from previous years, data from other statistical series, and more information on projections of education statistics.